Free elmentary education in rural areas

1458. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Wilt the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister issued directions to his Ministry to make elementary education free in the rural areas and take decision to take care of all school expenses of the children, not just fees and mid-' day meals;

(b) whether clearing the proposal under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Prime Minister has desired that all the school expenses, text books, stationery, public transport, uniform, meals be paid by the Government;

(c) if so, what are the steps being taken to implement all the suggestions made by the Prime Minister; and

(d) how many States have taken steps till now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The Government of India is already implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the cooked-mid-day meal programme which *inter-alia,* include certain components to offset the costs of elementary education. Further more, a Draft Free and Compulsory Education Bill alongwith a report has been submitted to and deliberated upon by the Central Advisory Board of Education in July 2005, which includes definition of "free education."

Strengthening professional education

1459. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to strengthen the professional education in Universities and colleges:

(b) if so, by when and the salient features of the professional education in view of requirement and the agencies involved for the purpose;

(c) whether necessary infrastructures are available for the professional education in the country; and

(d) if so, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has been established under AICTE Act, 1987 with a view for proper planning and co-ordinated development of the technical education system throughout the country, the promotion of qualitative improvements of such education in relation to planned quantitative growth and the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the technical education system.

As mandated by the AICTE Act, 1987, the Council lays down norms and standards in the field of technical education and insists on their fulfilment before granting approval to technical institutions/courses to ensure quality. The process of approval includes periodic inspections, appraisal of the inspection reports and conveying the deficiencies identified, including those relating to infrastructure, to the concerned institution for rectification. The respective State Governments and affiliating University are involved in the approval process. At present, sufficient number of institutes to impart technical education is available in the country.

Literacy rate

1460. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been an increase in the absolute number of literates at all level between 1991 and 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that the literacy rate grows to 64.8 per cent in 2001; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that two-third of the population in the 6-10 age group is attending school in the 11-13 age group?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Census 2001, the literacy rate of the country has increased from 52.21% in 1991 to 64.84% in 2001. The number of literate persons has increased from 359.28 million in 1991 to 560.68 million in 2001, thus adding an additional 201.40 million literates in the country.

(c) As per the available information, the Gross Enrollment Ratio in Class l-V (6-11 years) is 95.39 and that of Class Vl-VIII (11-14 years) is 60.99.